



Ocean Watch Action Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, April 14th, 2023, from 9:30-11:30 am via Zoom (see recording)

The purpose of this committee is to advance the actions recommended in the 2020 Ocean Watch Howe Sound report.

Participants:

Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw:

[Julie Aeyelts](#), Environment Manager, Rights and Title Department

Bowen Island Municipality:

[Sue Ellen Fast](#), Councillor, Carla Skuce, Manager of Environment & Parks Planning

District of West Vancouver:

[Heather Keith](#), Senior Manager of Climate Action and Environment

Town of Gibsons:

[Michelle Lewis](#), Natural Asset Technician, [Annemarie De Andrade](#), Councillor

District of Squamish:

[Lauren Greenlaw](#), Councillor, [Sarah McJannet](#), Planner

Metro Vancouver:

[Marcin Pachcinski](#), Division Manager

Marine Stewardship Initiative – Make Way Charitable Society:

[Courtney Smaha](#), Project Director

Marine Life Sanctuary Society:

[Adam Taylor](#), Board Member

Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society:

[Ruth Simons](#), Executive Director, [Micaela](#) Anguita, OECM Project Director, [Ian Winn](#), Director, [Hasan Hutchinson](#), Director

Apologies: [Kate-Louise Stamford](#), Trustee Gambier Island Local Trust Committee & SCR D Area Director
[Jen McCutcheon](#), Director, Area A, Metro Vancouver

Moderator: Ruth Simons, Executive Director, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS)

Note Taker: Diane Mitchell (from recording), Administrator, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS)

ACTIONS

1	Comments can be made on Woodfibre LNG's application to the BC Energy Regulator for an effluent permit under the provisions of the Environmental Management Act, Application No. 422015 .
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2	Comments on the Unity Plan biodiversity conservation goals and governance are still welcome.
3.	Report on OWAC activities to the Howe Sound Community Forum to be prepared for April 21 st
4.	Planning for a Marine Debris Fund to be developed and brought forward to HSCF

NOTES:

AGENDA	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS/ DECISIONS
1. Welcome & Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of returning sea stars as seen on recent photo. • Adam Taylor witness to Blanket Ceremony for John Buchannan; many decades monitoring herring spawn in Squamish estuary and working with Sta'7mes School; passing on knowledge/data to Jonny Williams and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw. 	
2. Review last meeting's notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UBC e-DNA project not known to have started but anticipated to be June. • Continued reminder for marine debris reporting. • April 21 HSCF; DFO will be updating on Rockfish and Glass Sponge Reef closure reviews. • Hosted Howe Sound Conservation Network event on March 31; contributing to Unity Plan. <p>Heather:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Vancouver: Urban Forest Management Plan has been drafted but will be going back to community for another round of public engagement. • West Vancouver Climate Action Strategy currently working on GHG emissions inventory both for community and corporate; doing projection and financial model to achieve targets by 2350; will get back to Council by summer break. <p>Ian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCRD is in final draft of its Climate Action Plan; expected to go to the Board in next month or so • Jenny from NSMEC and Ian identified possible site at Hutchinson Creek which would be ideal for monitoring European Green Crab if a volunteer coordinator can be found. Unfortunately, NSMEC did not get funding from DFO they were seeking for monitoring. <p>Carla:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowen Island applied for monitoring licences for 	

European Green Crab and has two volunteers. Still looking for volunteer coordinator. Christine at DFO will be doing training with them. Ruth will speak with Carla and Courtney in due course about volunteer coordinator.

Courtney:

- Coastal Zone Conference coming up in June.

Adam:

- Provincial Coastal Marine Strategy meeting happened. Feedback period closing today.

Ruth:

- WLNG noise amendment still outstanding; no decisions made. An ad/comment period for amendment for effluent discharge permit has been published. HSBRIS sent in initial comment which resulted in corrected information provided (in new ad).
- Fish Creek project/analysis complete. Report is being finalized and will be distributed to participants and on HSBRIS website.

Annemarie & Michelle:

- Town of Gibsons Council directed staff to update OCP policies and town bylaws regarding aquifer protection based on aquifer mapping studies in 2021.
- Outstanding recommendations from 2013 aquifer report and from 2021 report were utilized. Council supportive; planning and budgeting underway. Additional monitoring wells being installed in Lower Gibsons where aquifer is thin, to define level of risk tolerance. Flow accretion study will be done on creeks (turbidity, pH, salinity, temperature); working with Swiftwater Consulting.
- Maple Ridge looking to the work of Michelle/Gibsons for their aquifer protection development.
- Town of Gibsons (with 16 other communities) building Municipal Floodrisk Assessment Framework (coastal, fluvial, overland). Good way to set benchmark and flood set tolerance.

Sarah

- Following coastal flooding last December, Manager of Municipal Infrastructure has been engaging with ECCC about coastal water level data and predictions. Looking to bring in 5 day forecasting for emergency preparedness and enhance systems. Sarah can update as this progresses. DoS was sent helpful matrix to input data to help categorize risk. Willing to chat further other communities if interest is there.

Adam

- MLSS working to restart rockfish monitoring with support from HSBRIS and DFO. Outreach launch

Comments can be made to WLNG re application for effluent discharge

	<p>event and open houses at Whytecliff Park. Online training sessions delivered. 5 boat surveys conducted and sadly illegal fishing on every survey. Dive surveys also conducted. 7 species of rockfish observed. 3 years funding secured for education and outreach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to approach Province to ask for expansion of existing sponge reef areas removed from land base which would prevent industrial tenures etc. Called Removal of Disposition. Not protection but first step. Adam will be looking for letters of support. • Working with West Vancouver District and Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw to install interpretive signage and bring back no fishing signs. Also in discussion to enhance protection through zoning of the park. Illegal fishing is still a problem. <p>Courtney</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start on 2023 herring survey. Bountiful season. Survey usually ended April 14 but spawn still present so continuing. Report will be published when ready. • Dungeness crab light trap being launched out of Horseshoe Bay. About 10 volunteers helping out between now and September. • Hoping to hire another Marine Debris Coordinator through Oceanwise. Hope for this year will be to continue to promote data collection into system and fill gaps on marine debris retrieval. • Working with Oceanwise on Kelp Forestation Project; tied up on private dock on Bowen Island that will be moved to Gibsons to cultivate before planting in spring of 2024. Also hoping for Leigh Joseph to conduct a kelp workshop with Skwxwú7mesh youth but timing TBD. 	
<p>3. Share community updates related to the Action Tracker.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For filling gaps in reporting, Ruth may approach OWAC members to add more data 	
<p>4. Photos and reports from recent marine debris tracking and clean-up.</p>	<p>Ian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In March, Styrofoam pieces/blocks collected for transfer to Ocean Legacy site in Richmond, for recycling. A large mass of debris was observed floating outside of log boom area in Twin Creeks in West Howe Sound. Styrofoam encased in concrete with wire mesh and plastic with attached mussels Log sort operator dragged it ashore and broke it down and divert to proper waste stream. Styrofoam alone was 	<p>Submit marine debris sightings and share MSI's Marine Debris Reporting system</p>

	<p>~400 cubic feet. May have come from decommissioned marina system in West Vancouver and been in water for around a decade. Fortunately company covered costs (over \$4000) as Ian was not able to secure funds from elsewhere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where will funds come from for similar debris? <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boat at Britannia Beach remains against the rocks. Trusts that DFO have assessed for pollution and navigation hazards but will have to be local effort to remove. • Large abandoned boats/debris are dealt with by Transport Canada and smaller debris can be collected by communities. Challenge is the medium sized debris. • Marine Debris Fund proposal put forward to OWAC; potential sub-committee, potentially administered by MSI, Make A Way Foundation or local governments. Determine fund distribution; develop best practices; update resources. Invite sponsorships, tourism/filming fees to reach annual goal of \$10,000-\$15,000. <p>Annemarie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there no mechanism to fine owners through Transport Canada? And how realistic is it for Coordinator to request funds from government? <p>Ruth & Ian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill C64 may bring in change on this but tracking down owner has to be taken on by community. A Coordinator could keep updated on new rules etc. But many of the old boats have been stripped of registrations. Also need to consider the docks that have no registered owners. 	<p>Fund proposal notes will be distributed for feedback.</p>
<p>5. BC Marine Parks</p>	<p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC Parks Marine Action Plan is strategy intended to improve recreation sites; would include Apodaca, Halkett, Plumper Cove and Porteau Cove. • Halkett Bay dock will not be in service this summer as sea lions destroyed it and repairs will not be made in time. Concern for safety and fire. <p>Adam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change at Apodaca was made without consultation with local residents regarding emergency access for campsites. Would encourage BC Parks to engage with locals before making changes. <p>Sarah:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this plan a discussion draft or is it proceeding? Would be ideal to meet with BC Parks representatives to understand the plan and next steps. 	<p>Consider reaching out to BC Parks with thoughts or concerns</p>

<p>6. Howe Sound Community Forum.</p>	<p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be updating on OWAC at April 21 forum in Gibsons. • Welcomes assistance in reporting out. • Short report will be sent in advance. • Two recommendations coming out of committee would be to initiate a marine debris fund and request for support by communities for the MLSS's attempt to have glass sponge reef areas Removal from Disposition (removing the land from availability for any development/extraction). • Thanks to Islands Trust for supporting the HSCF and OWAC meetings; \$3200 for secretariat services which covers some of the cost. • Most local governments around region have signed a MoU for HSCF. Always looking for more funding to help cover additional costs. Thanks to Town of Gibsons for the next meeting on April 21. • Not HSCF related but Ruth open to suggestions for structure or agenda items for OWAC meetings. <p>Sue Ellen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on impacts of sea level rise predictions completed by Metro Vancouver. Can be distributed. 	
<p>7. HSBRI Management Plan</p>	<p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirational plan comes out of the UNESCO designation; action plan for biodiversity conservation, reconciliation, sustainable development. Guiding document for next 8 years when next periodic review would occur. • Discussion paper has been out since Feb 2022. Challenging to get engagement. Wanting engagement focus on the goals. Not enough time at recent Howe Sound Conservation Network gathering to go through them. • At HSCN gathering, had presentation by Jay Ritchlin of David Suzuki Foundation on COP 15 targets. Unity Plan high level goals tie into these COP 15 goals. Looking feedback on these goals as they are not finalized. Ruth shared the goals with discussion on Goal 3: Implement the Canada Nature Legacy targets in Átl'ka7tsem / Howe Sound to protect 25% of land, fresh water and ocean ecosystems by 2025 and 30% by 2030. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In marine, glass sponge reefs only areas considered protected but not as official marine 	

protected areas (MPAs). Instead, they are OECM (other effective conservation area measures). Only 3.28% of marine area protected.

- If new marine area refuges proposed by DFO are improved this will increase area slightly but boundaries not yet known to define area.

Sarah:

- To what extent have we done mapping as region? For Squamish local level zoning for conservation that has been done, it is probably not been accounted for in overall mapping. How can this change?

Ruth:

- HSBRS been funded by ECCC for OECMs. With Mica now OECM Project Director, she will be working with others to determine what can and cannot be considered OECM. HSBRS work would be to support local governments to work towards getting these local areas submitted.

Adam:

- Will be coming back to group with information on how local and regional governments can help with protected areas. With marine protected areas there is no enforcement as DFO does not have the staff. A serious problem.

Sue Ellen:

- What is a protected area but more from terrestrial area? There is a perception that private land is good protection but this is not necessarily a long term solution as properties change hands.

Ruth:

- Terrestrial will be covered in separate conversations

Courtney:

- Are rockfish conservation areas covered in protections?
- Agreed there are enforcement issues but protected areas can encourage community stewardship.

Mica:

- RCAs are not considered OECM; only glass sponge reef areas but DFO is considering combining RCAs and GSRs.

Ruth:

- Nobody objects to the 25% by 2025 and 30% by 2030 target but need to define the objectives/actions for that goal. Ruth seeking feedback on these.
- Plan also includes [governance model](#) (Roundtable) for Biosphere Region includes representation from a biodiversity conservation committee. This should include marine and terrestrial. OWAC is already established so question is who from the committee

Review Unity Plan discussion paper, goals and proposed actions and submit to Ruth

	<p>would want to represent the new biodiversity committee?</p> <p>Sue Ellen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has volunteered for governance committee (clarified as MSI governance committee, not Roundtable). If there is a liaison role, happy to help, but as there has been no first meeting she is not clear on what is needed. Also interested in Biodiversity Conservation Advisory Committee. <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge will be accommodating local/regional governments as well as sectors in a group of around 30 people so that there is fair and equitable representation. • Need to avoid confusion between Roundtable and MSI governance committee. 	
<p>8. 11:00 – 11: 30 – Informal networking and topics of interest</p>	<p>Marcin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geohazard study for Electoral Area A explores coastal inundation potential mapping; did look at Howe Sound in 3 maps (areas within Metro Vancouver). • Climate 2050 Nature and Ecosystems Road Map going to Board at end of month. If adopted, language includes broader support for 'nature needs half'. • Utilities depts may be looking at zoning, as per Sarah's earlier report on the DoS coastal inundation/emergency planning risk assessments. <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been working on Unity Plan for 18 months; keep adding content so know major issues, SWOT. Will be document referred to during planning. A lot of new business referrals coming to HSBRI to learn "what the biosphere thinks". <p>Lauren:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be interested in being more involved in Roundtable but currently has less knowledge. <p>Anne Marie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also interested in being involved in Roundtable and Biodiversity Conservation Committee. <p>Courtney:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference between Roundtable and MSI Governance Advisory Committee (mostly local government staff with elected officials if no staff to participate) will be focusing on collective vision for marine environment (using Oceanwise report and Marine Reference Guide) on marine spatial planning, zoning and other uses. First will be hosted next week. • Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw also creating their marine 	

	<p>use plan so will assist conversations toward that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference still to be created. <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Committee to discuss recruitment recognized the fact there are some who are committed and often volunteer but should perhaps try to reach new people, including diversity of ages and backgrounds. • What is best way to get representation from local governments? • Will not have a consultation function, e.g., for businesses. <p>Ian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it be different from Howe Sound Community Forum's staff liaison person as identified in Principles of Cooperation? <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That will be for governments to decide. <p>Sarah:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So much energy and action around biosphere, OWAC, HSCF etc. For participants, there needs to be a lot of clarity on relationships between the different committees and what they are in service to. <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Roundtable will be unique to our situation. Other biospheres have different situations and governance models. • UNESCO designation is forever so this is the beginning of the governance to maintain the designation for decades to come. <p>Anne Marie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are other biospheres managed? <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many countries the biospheres have power. Some are local government run. Here our power is in consensus-building. • HSBRIS will be going into Board recruitment phase. • Capilano University committed to the biosphere and ultimately hope to have a staff person dedicated to it. <p>Adam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the debate on the new campsite at Cape Rogers Curtis, there are lot of people upset over lack of information, and transport etc. But there are also a lot of supporters who refer to the biosphere and the need to protect the area, but are not considering the impact to the locals. Answers still need to be forthcoming. <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metro Vancouver Parks Board reached out to HSBRIS about a week in advance of the engagement. Ruth met 	
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with them and reiterated the goals towards biodiversity conservation, sustainable development goals and equity.

Adam:

- Has there been consideration for sea level review for Manion Bay? Beach is slowly being eroded.

Sue Ellen:

- Parks has been discussing this; can talk offline.

Next meeting June, 2023